

**SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**October 10, 2005**

Members present: Mr. Robert Staton, Mr. Alex Martin, Mrs. Traci Young Cooper, Rep. Bill Cotty, Mr. Robert Daniel, Mr. Dennis Drew, Senator Mike Fair, Mr. Wallace Hall, Senator Robert W. Hayes, Mrs. Karen Iacovelli, Mrs. Susan Marlowe, Mr. Neil Robinson, Mr. Harold Stowe, Superintendent Inez Tenenbaum, Rev. Judy Williams, and Senator Kent Williams

- I. **Welcome and Introductions:** Mr. Staton welcomed members and guests to the meeting.
- II. **Minutes of August 8-9:** The minutes of the August 8-9 meeting were approved as distributed.
- III. **Subcommittee Reports**
  - A. Academic Standards and Assessments: Mr. Staton reported on behalf of the subcommittee. The subcommittee recommended approval of the science content standards (as approved on first reading by the State Board of Education [SBE]); however, Mr. Staton drew members' attention to a revision to the biology standards proposed by Superintendent Tenenbaum (copies of the proposed wording had been faxed to members prior to the meeting). Members discussed the appropriateness of a variety of EOC actions including adopting the subcommittee recommendation and sending a request to the SBE to consider Superintendent Tenenbaum's proposal. Members also discussed the impact of delaying approval until the proposed wording changed had been addressed by the SBE. There was discussion of severing the biology standards from the other standards; that is, approving all standards except for high school biology. Senator Fair moved to adjourn debate on the standards. The motion passed.
  - B. EIA and Improvement Mechanisms: Mr. Daniel reported on behalf of the subcommittee. He provided information on three pending evaluative studies: the contract for the extended learning time study; the strategy for the evaluation of the alternative technical assistance program and the second (academic progress) phase of the gifted and talented program evaluation. He detailed the findings of the annual study of the teacher loan program. Members asked several questions about the teacher loan program including its primary agency for policy and the increases in funding for the fiscal year 2006.
  - C. Parental and Community Involvement: There was no report.
  - D. Public Awareness: Mr. Martin reported on behalf of the subcommittee. He outlined the communications plan provided to members in the meeting packet. Upon his motion, the plan was approved. He reminded members that approval had implied a commitment to participate in the county meetings. Mr. Martin also reminded members of the PAIRS summit to be held on Saturday, October 15.

**IV. 2005-2006 Objectives:** Mr. Staton asked for approval of the 2005-2006 objectives as distributed in the meeting packet. The objectives were approved.

**V. Special Report: Five Year Matched Student Data:** Mr. Potter provided information on the matched data set. The EOC staff has matched student records across five years beginning with 2000 and extending through 2004. The matched data set may be unique among states and we should be cautious in interpreting the findings. Generally, Mr. Potter emphasized stronger performance over time in mathematics than English language arts, the poor latter grade performance of students who had been retained and gaps that emerge in comparisons of pay and free/reduced lunch program participants and between white and African American students. The EOC then heard from four discussants:

- a) Mrs. Cindy Saylor, Deputy Superintendent of Education - Mrs. Saylor discussed the data and how it can be used to direct future actions. She reminded members about the change in the content standards over time through the cyclical review processes (new math in 2000 and new English language arts in 2002) as well as the rigor of the standards. She noted the progress in moving students initially scoring Below Basic to higher performance levels. Of particular interest is the SDE work with curriculum calibration. The state summary reports indicate a dramatic slip in classroom student work to levels below grade level (in mathematics from 93 percent on grade level in grade 1 to 41 percent on grade level in grade 8 and in English language arts from 95 percent on grade level in grade 1 to 55 percent on grade level in grade eight). She recommended increasing support for teachers, continued improvements in communicating the content standards and reviewing and analyzing critically student work and teacher assignments.
- b) Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, Superintendent, Horry County Schools - Dr. Postlewait provided information on the structured approach employed in Horry County Schools beginning with the belief systems and translating those beliefs into a system of data-driven performance. A copy of the PowerPoint was made available to members. She addressed areas in which the state could help the school district meet the challenge of high achievement for all including ten actions (1) Limit and clarify the standards; (2) Develop writing rubrics that are much more specific; (3) Train teachers to score student work in all areas; (4) Teach and test grammar usage; (5) Revise the middle school curriculum –using the Advanced Placement curriculum as the target; (6) Design eighth and tenth grade assessments to provide information linked to the technical college entrance requirements; (7) Research and develop materials, methods, and funding that are most effective with students from poverty and with gifted students; (8) Revise the testing program; (9) Award course credit for proficiency not time; and (10) Center accountability around academic growth not status.
- c) Dr. Edgar Taylor, Superintendent, Laurens School District 55 - Dr. Taylor presented materials and information regarding the approach in his district with particular attention to the Montessori approach and the deeply embedded balanced literacy model. He detailed district commitments to quality early childhood programs and to writing across the curriculum.

- d) Dr. William Brown, Brown Star Consulting - Dr. Brown discussed the data from a technical perspective. He outlined the changes in performance noting minimal improvements in mathematics and no improvements in English language arts. He indicated that the processes for setting performance standards and initial results supported the quality of the standard-setting process. He reminded us that we are chasing a moving target—not only are students asked to master the next grade but to perform at higher levels. Dr. Brown discussed changes in the curriculum, student physiological changes, increases in outside distractions and peer group influences. He recommends examinations of instruction—Is there alignment among the written, taught and tested curriculum? Are students able to apply what they have learned in the testing environment? How has instruction changed? Is the education system (policies, process, and approach) aligned with the expectations we hold for our students?

Members asked a number of questions of discussants and complimented each on their work.

- VI. General Discussion:** Mr. Staton reminded members that his term as chairman expired in December. He has asked Mr. Stowe to coordinate the nomination for a new chairman.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.